

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LAGOS 00633 01 OF 02 162154Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----024926 162207Z /72

O R 161845Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5959
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY DIJIBOTI
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY ANTANARIVO
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USINT HAVANA
USNATO 040

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 LAGOS 0633

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, ET, SO, US, OAU
SUBJECT: ENCOURAGEMENT OF ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI NEGOTIATIONS
SECRET

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REF: (A) STATE 011011, (B) LAGOS 0476, (C) LAGOS 0472

1. FOLLOWING ARE OUR COMMENTS ON REFTEL A.
2. WE REPORTED IN REFTEL B THAT THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO SEND LETTERS (WITHIN A FORTNIGHT' TO THE SEVEN

OTHER GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE MEMBERS OF THE OAU GOOD OFFICES COMMISSION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY FAVOR SENDING AN INVITATION TO THE SOMALI AND ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENTS TO ATTEND A MEETING IN LAGOS IN FEBRUARY TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITIES OF REACHING A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. WE BELIEVE THAT THE CHANCES OF BOTH SIDES ACCEPTING THE INVITATION WILL BE GREATLY INFLUENCED BY THE MILITARY PROSPECTS IN THE OGADEN WHENEVER THE INVITATION ARRIVES. THE QUESTION ARISES WHETHER WE SHOULD URGE COMMISSION MEMBERS TO RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY TO THE FMG'S QUERY.

3. THE FMG COULD EASILY TAKE OFFENSE IF WE MADE DEMARCHES OF THAT NATURE WITHOUT HAVING CONSULTED IT IN ADVANCE, PARTICULARLY SINCE WE WOULD BE MAKING USE OF INFORMATION THAT IT HAD SUPPLIED US. IN ANY CASE WE RECOMMEND AGAINST USG APPROACHES TO THE MEMBERS OF THE GOOD OFFICES COMMISSION ON THIS SUBJECT. WE URGE CAUTION AGAINST EFFORTS BY US THAT COULD BE VIEWED AS OVERZEALOUS BY NIGERIA.

4. WE ARE INTERESTED IN THE SUGGESTION MADE BY THE NEW ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR HERE (REFTEL C) THAT THE US MIGHT SEEK TO OBTAIN A COMMITMENT FROM SOMALIA TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS AND HEAVY ARMOR FROM THE OGADEN, AND A COMMITMENT FROM ETHIOPIA NOT TO ATTACK SOMALIA. ETHIOPIA MIGHT BE WILLING TO ACCEPT SUCH RECIPROCAL COMMITMENTS AT PRESENT, BUT WE DOUBT THAT SOMALIA WOULD BE WILLING TO DO SO UNTIL ITS CHANCES OF HOLDING ON TO A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE OGADEN BEGIN CLEARLY TO FALTER. IT
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MIGHT NEVERTHELESS BE USEFUL FOR THE USG OR SOME OTHER GOVERNMENT AT OUR REQUEST TO BEGIN SOUNDING OUT THE SOMALIS REGARDING THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS RECIPROCAL COMMITMENTS OF THAT NATURE.

5. MEANWHILE WE SUGGEST CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO LINKING OUR CRITICISM OF SOVIET/CUBAN INTERVENTION WITH 'EQUAL TIME' GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF ETHIOPIA'S BELIEF THAT THE SOMALIS HAVE CROSSED A RECOGNIZED BORDER. WE SURMISE THAT, WHILE EMBARRASSED THAT EXTRA-CONTINENTAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE ONCE AGAIN HAD TO BE REQUESTED BY AN INDEPENDENT AFRICAN STATE, MOST AFRICAN COUNTRIES SUPPORT THE OAU PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND BELIEVE SOMALIA HAS TRANSGRESSED IT. WE MUST NOT BE SEEN TO IGNORE THAT PRINCIPLE.

6. WHILE FULLY RECOGNIZING THE OBVIOUS ELEMENTS OF DIFFERENCE

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5960
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USINT HAVANA
USNATO 041

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 LAGOS 0633

EXDIS

BETWEEN THE TWO CASES, WE ARE STRUCK BY THE PARALLELS BETWEEN
MOROCCAN/FRENCH/EGYPTIAN/SAUDI ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE WHEN IT WAS
'INVADED' FROM ANGOLA AND THE SOVIET/CUBAN ASSISTANCE TO
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ETHIOPIA WHEN INVADED BY SOMALIA. IN THE FIRST CASE WE QUIETLY
APPROVED; IN THE SECOND WE LOUDLY OBJECT. THE PARALLELS AND THE
DIFFERENCE CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO GO UNNOTICED. IT WILL BE RECALLED
THAT GARBA PUBLICLY STATED, NEAR THE END OF THE SHABA AFFAIR,
THAT NIGERIA RESPECTED MOBUTU'S RIGHT TO CALL FOR OUTSIDE ASSIS-
TANCE TO REPEL INVADERS FROM OUTSIDE. WHERE NIGERIA NOT DESIGNATED
AS GOOD OFFICES CHAIRMAN, WE SUSPECT GARBA MIGHT SAY THE SAME

THING ABOUT ETHIOPIA'S CALL FOR HELP. GROMYKO PRESSED HIM TO DO IT BUT HE REFUSED.

7. A FINAL SUGGESTED CAUTION: LOOSE TALK OF OUR 'REVITALIZING' THE OAU COMMISSION, WHICH NIGERIA CHAIRS, OR OUR 'WEXAMANING' HOW OTHER COUNTRIES MIGHT SUPPLEMENT THE COMMISSION'S ROLE, RUNS THE RISK OF ANTAGONIZING NIGERIA AND POSSIBLY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION. ADMITTEDLY THE OAU HAS LITTLE TO SHOW TO DATE FOR ITS EFFORTS. HOWEVER, SENSITIVITIES TO AMERICAN ACTIVISM ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT IN AFRICAN POLITICAL-MILITARY MATTERS ARE STILL VERY PREVALENT HERE.

EASUM

SECRET

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